

# HEAD OF THE AMERICAN LEAGUE SEES NO CHANCE FOR RED SOX

**Names Four Other Teams Which, in His Opinion, Will Give Boston Team a Very Close Race For the Pennant; Declares the Athletics Are Not Out of the Race Because of Losing Men.**

NEW YORK, Feb. 26.—Byronne Harless, president of the American League, today predicted a five-cornered fight, one of those old-time stalling combats of the sort that baseball fans have seen so often in the past few years, in the next American League pennant race. He said the Red Sox are not out of the race because of losing men, but he believes the Athletics are not out of the race because of losing men.

Among the big gamblers of New York who make a custom of keeping their eyes on the baseball field, opening the speculation long before the first game of the season, the Red Sox are made an even money favorite against the Athletics. They are careful, however, to avoid taking wagers on the inverse side of this proposition; they prefer to have their margin of risk arranged so that they will win if the Red Sox fail to take the pennant. The gambler, however, who takes an early interest in such things, has fallen in line with the consensus of baseball writers' opinion that the Red Sox are a clinch, and many small bets are being placed on that proposition.

## Willard Needs Real Sparring Partners McCloskey Stands For Clean Baseball

WHEN Jess Willard gets a couple of real sparring partners, it will be possible for the boxer to get a real line on his ability and his chances against Jack Johnson at the Juarez racetrack on March 6. To attempt to fight Willard by his work with Savage, Henkle, Monahan and O'Rourke would hardly be fair. These four men are now on the camp census as sparring partners but Henkle appears to be the only one who knows anything about boxing and he is too light to give Willard a real workout. O'Rourke didn't attempt to box Friday, but he may be another exception. He has the strength and the speed, but he may be another exception. He has the strength and the speed, but he may be another exception. He has the strength and the speed, but he may be another exception.

Joe Jeanette is said to have offered his services as sparring partner for Willard. It is too bad that the offer was not accepted. Willard is in good condition. He has the strength and the speed, but he may be another exception. He has the strength and the speed, but he may be another exception. He has the strength and the speed, but he may be another exception.

According to the latest dope, Jack Johnson will be at his camp near Juarez by Monday. The fans can then find out just what his physical condition is. Right now it must be admitted that the negro has it on the white hope in the matter of speed. He is a physical condition man, he is an important item in the coming bout. If Jack Johnson is in the best of health, he will have a mighty good chance of winning.

Willard's great reach was evident when he held his own against Henkle and whaled him with the other glove. His strength was shown by the easy manner in which he hurled Monahan across the ring. But Jeanette can give him a bit more training to get his wind better. He can easily stand 45 rounds of work. He can easily stand 45 rounds of work. He can easily stand 45 rounds of work.

Willard seldom used his right, except a close range. He showed a fairly good left jab and once in a while, unworked against Henkle, a left hook to the face that looked pretty good.

John McCloskey, promoter of the proposed Rio Grande Baseball association, made one point very clear today in an interview. "No person is going to be asked to donate one cent to the El Paso or any other club. I am offering a business proposition to the fans of this city. We will incorporate a club and place the stock on sale. I expect that it will pay a fairly good dividend," he said.

"Another thing I want to make clear is that there will be no saloon or bar at the new park. We want to cater to women and children as well as to men and I want no liquor sold on our property. Neither will there be any betting. The rules of the National association prohibit betting on the grounds of all clubs, and I intend to see that this rule is enforced here. Betting has a bad effect on baseball, for there may be a 'weak sister' on a team and gamblers sometimes get to these men."

"Honest baseball can be made a big paying proposition here. I have all kinds of faith in El Paso—so much that I have refused two offers from other leagues during the past few days. If I can get Bill Hurley to take hold of one of the clubs, he will prove a great help. Bill is of the aggressive type and will make a great hit with the fans of any town where he takes hold."

"We are already taking steps for the incorporation of the local club and stock will be on sale in a few days." The local fans will make no mistake in backing up McCloskey. The writer has known him for about 10 years and up in the northwest he is known as "Honest John." He has been a great success as a minor league manager.

McCloskey says that some of the local fans think that the jumps between towns in the proposed league are too great for a class D organization. Just pull out your map book and take a run at the map of western Canada. When the Western Canada league was first organized, the most easterly city was Winnipeg and Calgary was on the west end. It was about as far from Calgary to Winnipeg as it is from El Paso to Los Angeles. Yet the Western Canada league was one of the most successful class D circuits ever organized. It was later split up to allow other cities to have teams but even yet it is a pretty long jump from Calgary to Saskatoon or from Edmonton to Regina. The Rio Grande association will have no jumps half as long as the northern teams have made for several seasons. Clubs in the north circuit were all big money makers until the war spoiled things last season.

Things look bright for the Rio Grande association but the whole difficulty lies in getting things started. Though the first start was made in El Paso, three of the other cities seem to have arrangements a bit more advanced than they are here and "Honest John" is determined that this situation shall not prevail for long.

Chicago and Detroit. He does not see much chance for St. Louis, New York or Cleveland to break into the first division this year unless unforeseen developments occur on the part of these clubs.

Johnson will not discuss the ability of any of the various club managers, but he grants the power of the Red Sox, with a fine outfield made up of Speaker, Hooper and Lewis, a fair defensive and offensive quartet in the infield with Hobbs, Javiera, Scott and Gardner, better than average catching with Carrigan, Cady and Thomas, and a crack pitching staff made up of Foster, Leonard, Wood, Greig, Ray Collins and Shore. However, he also points out the strong points in the opposing four teams and lays as much stress on them.

Two of the four contenders have nearly as good pitching staffs as the Boston club, in Ray's opinion. He names Jim Scott, Bob Russell and Eddie Cicotte, of the White Sox, as superior to that of the Red Sox, and he talks in like vein about the three of the world champion Braves, Rudolph, Tyler and James. Walter Johnson in shape is such a marvelous twister that he alone would make the Washington corps formidable. Joe Bushing and several other capable pitchers of the younger generation are in the line in an acceptably between the wire thing days when Walter the Great hurled.

**Makes Other Comparisons.** The czar of the American league has plenty of other nice things to say about the various clubs. Speaking of the Athletics, he declares its catching staff of Williams, Henry and Alphonso superior to that of the Red Sox, and he talks in like vein about the White Sox backstops, with Ray Schalk, most formidable youngster in the game, as a player of resistance. In Eddie Collins and Buck Weaver, he thinks the White Sox outclass Boston at second base and shortstop. Turning to Washington again, he believes the Senators can match the Speaker of the House outfield with Clyde Milan, that Eddie Foster is better than Gardner at third base and that George McBride is better at shortstop.

The Athletics are not entirely broken up by the departure of Bender, Plank and Collins—far from it—in the czar's opinion. Schang and Lapp form a better catching staff than the Red Sox have; Melanie at first, Harry at short and "Home Run" Frank Baker at third are much better than the similar Boston infielders and the pitching staff has good possibilities, though somewhat uncertain, with Shawkey, Bressler, Bush, Wyckoff and Penneck, all youngsters possessing plenty of curves and speed.

The mighty slugging of Sam Crawford and Ty Cobb coupled with the great bat ranning of the latter is held in high favor by the league czar and makes him consider the chances of the Detroit Tigers favorably. Denie Bush at shortstop, George Moriarty at third also are held in great esteem by him. He also speaks of the Yankees as being rated well up among the clubs of our league this year unless I am over-verbose baseball prophet than I think I am. I really am sincere when I say I expect a free for all fight for the pennant. Don't think I am kidding because I'm not.

**PELL AND MORTIMER WIN CHAMPIONSHIP IN DOUGLAS.** Philadelphia, Pa., Feb. 26.—C. C. Pell, and S. A. Mortimer of New York won the national doubles racquet championship here Friday by defeating Dwight D. Davis and J. W. Year of St. Louis, four sets to three. The match was postponed three weeks ago because of an injury received by Pell in the match for the tournament for the championship. Davis and Year won the title last year.

I refer to John R. Gentry, Joe Patchen and Star Pointer. For five years they were at the top of thereabouts, always active and usually competing in the same races. This was especially true of John R. Gentry and Joe Patchen and out of their numerous contests there arose a wave of scandalous innuendo, hints of fixed races

and even of bigodromy, such as had never been known in this country. No Basis for Scandal. In the perspective of later years it is possible to look back upon those grand performers and see that there never was any tangible basis for this scandalous talk. Undoubtedly, it arose out of the frequency of the meetings and the fact that the paces were so evenly matched that their victories alternated with monotony frequency while their earnings all the time increased as the demand for their services grew.

When at the conclusion of their careers the totals were cast up it was found that John R. Gentry and Joe Patchen had met in 28 races of which each won exactly 14. John R. Gentry and Star Pointer met in four races, of which the former won three. During the first year of the rivalry between John and Joe the pair met 12 times each winning six events.

It is of course, the point on which the scandal mongers based their expressed beliefs that the racers were not on the square and that the owners or trainers of the great stallions were merely bigodromy with the object of keeping the public interested and gathering in the money. If there had been the slightest basis on which to base a claim of fraud and make it stick,

such action undoubtedly would have been taken for there were many, and some even in the light harness racing camp itself it is reported, who would have been only too willing to show up what they firmly believed to be a fraud. There were circumstances, however, which made this altogether unlikely, as I will point out later.

**The Spectacular Entry.** Of this trio, probably the most indubitably and the most spectacular was John R. Gentry. For some reason or other he caught the popular fancy and early in his career he became known as "The Little Red Horse." Without doubt he was an equine aristocrat and as one writer of the time expressed it, "he was a perfect horse and an exquisite beauty." Probably this combination of beauty, hardiness, talent and courage brought him his thousands of followers. There were few words of praise that could be sung about him that would not apply equally well to Joe Patchen, or for that matter Star Pointer.

In the course of several years there never was a time when even the most experienced horseman could say with any degree of certainty "John is better than Joe," or "Joe outclasses Star Pointer."

But a great many people made up their minds that one was better than the other and they persisted in this belief to the extent of becoming extremely suspicious when the months rolled by and the superiority of one or the other was not definitely established.

John R. Gentry first made his appearance as a five year old at Detroit in 1894, but it was not until 1895 that he entered into his famous rivalry with Joe Patchen that was to make them opponents in so many events and with such indecisive results. Each established his class in the campaign of the previous year. They were crowned mighty performers at about the same time and it was only natural that the public should begin to wonder who was the better. The public always has been a decision. The public always has been a decision. The public always has been a decision.

Answering this popular demand, they were matched time after time—12 times in that one year as I have said—and at the close of the season the public knew no more than it did at the start. It was along toward the close of the year of 1896 that the cries of bigodromy went up.

"These races are fixed," a great portion of the public cried as the season wound and the alternate victories and defeats were duly chronicled in the newspapers and turf journals. "Give us a race and settle this matter for good."

Whether these outbursts had anything to do with it or not, John R. Gentry was sold in the fall of 1895 to William Simpson, of New York, who placed the great stallion in the hands of Billy Andrews. Early in the season of 1896 Andrews gave his newly acquired mount against Robert J. and

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## The John R. Gentry---Joe Patchen Star Pointer Races

By ARTHUR R. KLING.



DURING the years 1895 to 1899 the American harness turf was graced by the activities of a trio of the most remarkable light harness performers the country ever has known. One of them, alone, was raced or exhibited in 35 states of the union and Canada during that period. There was hardly a race meeting of any consequence anywhere without the presence of at least one and sometimes all three of the horses competed to lend interest to the occasion.

The occurrence is all the more remarkable in that the three princes of the racing world were foaled in the same year and two of them were bred in the same state—Kansas. To make the occurrence still more noteworthy they were almost evenly matched in speed, each had a tremendous, popular following, and each was capable of hard campaigns, courageous and handsome.

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## When Jess Willard Quit the Farm Only Four Years Ago It Happened

By "TEX" O'ROURKE, Willard's Sparring Partner.

WILLARD'S CAMP, near El Paso, Tex., Feb. 26.—Four years ago today Jesse Willard took a carload of horses to the sales stables at Oklahoma City. He enjoyed the reputation of being one of the best judges of animals in the country and handled the finest grade only. He was sober, industrious and at peace with the world. Back on the ranch near St. Mary's, Kansas, where he was easily the best liked man in the section. He was everybody's friend and from his early boyhood had never struck anyone with his closed hand. He owned a prosperous little farm, married his sweetheart of many years, and traded horses as a hobby.

On this eventful day, Farmer Jesse missed a train, was forced to spend the night in the city, and the Goddess of Fate smiled.

An acquaintance suggested that they take in a boxing match to pass the evening but the big cowboy refused, saying that he had never seen one and never wanted to, and it was only after much coaxing that he finally consented. This was the turning point in his life. It took him from the obscurity of a small Kansas town to the limelight of Fame in almost a single bound. During the fight, Carl Morris, the original "white hope," was introduced as the man who would some day take the crown away from Jack Johnson. Turning to his friend, Jesse remarked in his own belt draw: "I reckon I've got to be a fighter."

Ten days after he saw his first boxing match and eight days after he pulled on his first padded gloves, fought Lou Plin in a 16 round final. By the following June he had gained considerable confidence by knocking

out five of his first six opponents and, looking around for new fields to conquer, drifted east.

Arthur Peiky was matched to meet the recognized white champion of dirt. He was taken sick and with scarcely a day's notice Willard substituted himself almost too sick to stand, he jumped at the chance to show the Gothamites his wares though offered but six percent of the gate receipts. The consensus of the newspaper decisions was that "Willard best McCarthy every minute of every round."

With the best record of any living heavyweight he was finally matched with the negro champion and made good his promise to "beat Morris to it." It would not surprise me if Willard quit the ring for good after March 6 if he is successful. He is still the farmer at heart. He stops in the middle of his road work to pick some little early spring flower or kick to pieces and analyze a rich looking clod of dirt. He talks of the birds and trees; of the old boyhood swimming hole and life in the open air. He is still more interested in a good horse than in a good fighter.

If he does leave the ring, it will be a big loss, for there are few enough men of his caliber in the game. As a typical example of his nature, I might cite an incident that happened this morning. Willard came into camp leading a fat young calf to market. He brought after some haggling from a farmer who was taking it to market. Knobloch ranch already has many head of cattle. Willard wanted one that he could call his own and unless I miss my guess, the better does not dim of over attention. It will grow up about as scientifically correct as any cow in these parts has for some time. With a hundred thousand dollar purse in sight, does it?

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## "Saving goes before security, happiness and good citizenship. It makes men."--Bismarck

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